AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please add or amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A multimedia communication system comprising:

a host computer having an external bus; and

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via said an external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus,

wherein said host computer is configured to display content of said converted video stream on a local video output device and substantially concurrently to send said content of said converted video stream for a remote display.

2. (Original) A system according to claim 1, the system further comprising:

a video output device connected to said host computer; and

a software video decoder installed on said host computer, said software video decoder configured to decode said converted video stream for display by said video output device.

3. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said host computer is connected to said network and is configured to receive via said network at least one encoded video stream, the system further comprising:

a video output device connected to said host computer; and

a software video decoder installed on said host computer, said software video decoder configured to decode at least one of said at least one encoded video stream for display by said video output device.

4. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said host computer has an application installed thereon, said application having data associated therewith, and the system further comprises a software multiplexer installed on said host computer for multiplexing said converted video stream with said data.

5. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein said host computer is selected from a group including: a personal computer, a laptop, a network computer, a personal digital assistant(PDA), and a workstation.

6. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said external bus is selected from a group including: Universal Serial Bus, IEEE 1394 Bus, an infrared wireless connection and a radio frequency wireless connection.

7. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein said standard is selected from a group including: ITU H.264, ITU H.263, ITU H.261, MPEG4, MPEG2 and MPEG1.

8. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said network is selected from a group including: an Internet Protocol (IP) network, an Ethernet networks and an ISDN line.

9. (Original) A multimedia communication system for a host computer having an external bus and connected to a video output device, the system comprising:

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via said external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus; and

a software video decoder installed on said host computer, said software video decoder configured to decode said converted video stream for display by said video output device.

10. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein said host computer is selected from a group including: a personal computer, a laptop, a network computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA) and a workstation.

11. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein said external bus is selected from a group including: Universal Serial Bus, an Ethernet network, IEEE 1394 Bus, an infrared wireless connection and a radio frequency wireless connection.

12. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein said standard is selected from a group including: ITU H.264, ITU H.263, ITU H.261, MPEG4, MPEG2 and MPEG1.

13. (Original) A system according to claim 9, wherein said network is selected from a group including: an Internet Protocol (IP) network, an Ethernet networks and an ISDN line.

14. (Original) A multimedia communication system for a host computer having an external bus and connected to a video output device, said host computer connected to a network and configured to receive via said network at least one encoded video stream, the system comprising:

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via said external bus, said unit configured to capture a raw video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus; and

a software video decoder installed on said host computer, said software video decoder configured to decode at least one of said at least one encoded video stream for display by said video output device.

15. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 14, wherein said host computer is selected from a group including: a personal computer, a laptop, a network computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA) and a workstation.

16. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 14, wherein said external bus is selected from a group including: Universal Serial Bus, an Ethernet network, IEEE 1394 Bus, an infrared wireless connection and a radio frequency wireless connection.

17. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 14, wherein said standard is selected from a group including: ITU H.264, ITU H.263, ITU H.261, MPEG4, MPEG2 and MPEG1.

18. (Original) A system according to claim 14, wherein said network is selected from a group including: an Internet Protocol (IP) network, an Ethernet networks and an ISDN line.

19. (Original) A multimedia communication system for a host computer having an external bus and connected to a video output device, said host computer connected to a network and configured to receive via said network at least one encoded video stream, the system comprising:

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via said external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus, said unit also configured to compress said captured video stream, and to send said compressed video stream to said host computer via said external bus;

a first software video decoder installed on said host computer, said first software video decoder configured to decode at least one of said at least one encoded video stream for display by said video output device; and

a second software video decoder installed on said host computer, said second software video decoder configured to decompress said compressed video stream for display by said video output device.

20. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 19, wherein said host computer is selected from a group including: a personal computer, a laptop, a network computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA) and a workstation.

21. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 19, wherein said external bus is selected from a group including: Universal Serial Bus, an Ethernet network, IEEE 1394 Bus, an infrared wireless connection and a radio frequency wireless connection.

22. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 19, wherein said standard is selected from a group including: ITU H.264, ITU H.263, ITU H.261, MPEG4, MPEG2 and MPEG1.

23. (Original) A system according to claim 19, wherein said network is selected from a group including: an Internet Protocol (IP) network, an Ethernet networks and an ISDN line.

24. (Original) A multimedia communication system for a host computer having an application installed thereon, said application having data associated therewith, said host computer having an external bus, the system comprising:

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via said external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus; and

a software multiplexer installed on said host computer for multiplexing said converted video stream with said data.

25. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 24, wherein said host computer is selected from a group including: a personal computer, a laptop, a network computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA) and a workstation.

26. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 24, wherein said external bus is selected from a group including: Universal Serial Bus, an Ethernet network, IEEE 1394 Bus, an infrared wireless connection and a radio frequency wireless connection.

27. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 24, wherein said standard is selected from a group including: ITU H.264, ITU H.263, ITU H.261, MPEG4, MPEG2 and MPEG1.

28. (Original) A system according to claim 24, wherein said network is selected from a group including: an Internet Protocol (IP) network, an Ethernet networks and an ISDN line.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for multimedia communication, the method comprising the steps of:

capturing a video stream from a video input device;

converting said video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network; and

sending said converted video stream to a host computer via an external bus of said host computer;

decoding said converted video stream in said host computer;

displaying content of said decoded video stream on a local output video device; and

sending said converted video stream to a remote terminal over a network.

30.   (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said host computer contains a bandwidth rate control mechanism, which may reduce the bandwidth of said transmitted encoded video stream over the said network.

31.   (New) A multimedia communication system comprising:

a host computer; and

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via an external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus,

wherein said host computer further comprises a [software] decoder configured to decode said converted video stream for display by a local video output device and to concurrently decode a second coded video stream received from a remote video source for display by said local video output device.

32. (New) A multimedia communication system comprising:

a host computer; and

a unit external to said host computer and connected to said host computer via an external bus, said unit configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert said captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send said converted video stream to said host computer via said external bus,

wherein said unit is configured to capture an audio stream from a local audio input device, and to send said audio stream to said host computer via said external bus, said host computer further comprises a [software] decoder configured to decode a converted audio stream from a remote audio coded source for play by a local audio output device and to concurrently play said audio stream from said local audio input device by said local audio output device.